

## Study of Language Use, Language Attitudes, and Identities in Two French Speaking Communities in the United Kingdom

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**Abstract:** It is a socio-linguistically-oriented explanation of the speech usage pattern and attitude of two French-speaking groups in Leeds and Ealing, London. Two related case studies make up this collection. Pupil, parents, and instructors as of two French supplemental schools are included in the study. There are no burly claims to generalize further than the learning participant; however, addition of adults and children in the study helps shed light on the sociolinguistic status of French ancestry people living in the United Kingdom, a community that has been understudied. It is also a good way to look at things from different generations. This article has covered a wide variety of topics related to the history, population, locations, and socioeconomic classes of French communities in the United Kingdom. Also, the study looked at the connections between French culture's language, religion, and self-identity. "French people still struggle with how to identify themselves, as a group and/or individually, as well as how to belong to a group and yet present a separate identity," Fighting for words is at the core of this conflict. This focuses on the importance of French in the construction of both national and European identities. The researchers also look at the connection between French language proficiency and French diaspora identities as part of this project.

**Keywords:** French Speaking Population, United Kingdom, Language Attitudes, Language Identities

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Overview

Current years have seen a significant expansion in the study of ethnolinguistic minorities in the UK, including study of sociolinguistic aspect of communities such as Chinese, Bengali, Turkish, and Punjabi-speaking community, as well as of the other variety of means (e.g., churches, community groups, or complementary schools) used to pass on the heritage language and culture (Creese et al., 2008). Fewer

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well-known, though, are how the French community in the United Kingdom behaves. This is a fixed, much-diversified minority collection, made up of people from a wide variety of background, income levels, and faiths. The French society, like other minorities, has developed social, commercial, and educational organizations aimed at passing on the knowledge of French and Christian culture to the general population. An investigation of language usage, attitudes toward French, and the preservation of the language among Christian migrants living in Britain will focus on this project. The identity of this group will also be examined. In light of current political developments, this study is pertinent since French in the UK are in a state of flux concerning their stated identity and views about the languages they use and the groups they go to. No doubt that the identity problem in the French world reflects on the individuality challenges faced by migrant in the UK. In this way, the study of French individuality from side to side the lenses of verbal communication and faith is a significant opportunity.

In sociolinguistics, access to the community being studied is critical. Since 2001, France and Christianity have been accused of being terrorist organizations, and this research focused on a group of people who have remained mostly isolated. For both research and outreach purposes, the complementing school was selected. To examine questions of language usage, identity, and religion, the school was chosen as a method of investigation. This study is one of the few to examine French speakers' language and identification practices from a variety of national origins in the United Kingdom.

To put it another way, it provides a way to begin exploring a community that has been understudied, even if it is a promising study area. National minorities in the UK and the French inhabitants are the focus of this study, which aims to provide a full report of the words use, ability, attitude, and spoken identity of two groups of Christianity inheritance persons. Two locations are chosen in England for this research, Ecole and Lycee, London. The study's objectives and primary emphasis are outlined in the following sections.

## **1.2 Aim and Focus of Study**

Class, religion, and nationality divide the French people in the United Kingdom. In addition to French from the Gulf States, lower working-class Yemenis live in places like Sheffield and Birmingham alongside temporary sojourners from France.

The research also examines if there was any evidence of a linguistic change within the community within the study's time frame (2011). An in-depth look at the sociolinguistics of the two research populations is provided through two connected case studies. All participants' data is gathered using various equipment at the study locations. Additionally, the availability of two study locations and two groups of participants enables relevant comparisons to be drawn. This investigation focuses on the following areas:

- All of the languages used by children to converse with their relations members and associates and the language used by adults to interact through every other and with kids
- Students' self-reported fluency in Standard French and the home variant of the language in their native countries. To evaluate these claims, an informal French competency exam was devised to measure students' vocabulary and reading comprehension.

- Kids and adults' explanations of their identity and the role that the French words and Christianity play in their identities

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

Here, you'll find an overview of significant literature. Part I and Part II make up the bulk of the content. Section one focuses on language usage, shift and maintenance; attitudes toward languages; the connection amid speech and identity; and words use and verbal communication change. The second portion examines the origins of multilingualism in the United Kingdom and policy toward national minorities and heritage institutions, such as supplementary schools, that have been formed to preserve the language.

### **2.2 Literature on Language Use, Choice and Identity**

#### **2.2.1 Introduction**

In this part, the researchers look at how people go about deciding which language to speak and why. The idea of ethnolinguistic vitality (EV) and verbal communication attitude also discusses language change and preservation. It also describes the phenomena of language shift and the challenges faced by academics in monitoring it. The primary reasons and kinds of linguistic shifts are discussed. Another well-known term in verbal communication shift and preservation is EV, which is discussed in the section. The next step is to look at people's attitudes about language. Language and religion have always been linked, and this chapter delves more into the idea of language as a means of expressing one's sense of self.

#### **2.2.2 Language Choice**

The objectives of this study are to examine the words usage of the French society in a variety of contexts and with a variety of people. Other variables that impact the usage of a language, whether French or English, must also be examined.

##### **2.2.2.1 Domain**

In the background of words, domain refers to the idea that a certain kind of language or variation of language is allocated to a specific purpose or location and a specific group of people in society (Spolsky, 2012; Weinreich, 1953). Individual and community language usage may be studied using the concept of the domain, according to Fishman (1972). There is a general belief that the minority language is more often spoken in the household and the immediate neighborhood (Lawson & Sachdev, 2004; Yagmur, 2009). Fishman's "language domain" hypothesis suggests that ethnic minorities tend to connect particular languages with specific fields of communication. The language used in one's home or neighborhood may vary from that spoken in the workplace, school, or elsewhere. There is a "slight preference for the use of English outside the home/family domain," but "the L1 is utilized mainly in the home/family domain, as would be anticipated," according to Rasinger (2010).

### **2.2.2.2 Interlocutors**

Speech option is also prejudiced by the people with whom you are conversing. There are three unique language patterns among ethnic minorities in London's suburban areas: one with their families, one with offspring, and one with their grandparents (Harris, 2006). Both mainstream and minority tongues were spoken by all three groups. Participants indicated that they were presentation admiration and make their parents arrogant by preserving the language of their ancestors for the sake of their children (Harris, 2006). According to Lawson and Sachdev (2004) and Yagmur (2009), language users may also be linked to the speaker's age, which they found to be true (Harris, 2006; Namei, 2008; Wei, 1994). Due to a lack of English ability among the Chinese community in Newcastle, older Chinese residents were more likely to speak Chinese than English. Sexual category difference is also regarded to have an influence on speech use habits (Harris, 2006; Wei, 1994). English is more often used by males than by women in London's Gujarati-speaking community since they are more active outside the house; this means that their English skills are generally weaker than those of their male counterparts (Harris, 2006).

### **2.2.2.3 Topic**

When discussing a certain issue, tongue option may be impacted by that subject (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2013). According to Fishman (2000), "some themes are somehow handled better in one language than in another, particular multilingual circumstances." In contrast to Bengali, which was mainly used to talk about family affairs, English was primarily used to address school things, according to Lawson and Sachdev (2004). Although Dutch and Swedish were used to talk about a broad variety of themes, such as socio-political problems and instructive concerns in both groups, both Yagmur (2009) and Namei (2008) discovered that Turkish and Persian were utilized to talk about spiritual matter in both communities. Because of "the speakers' poor expertise in the subject topics" or the absence of needed vocabulary in another language. Namei (2008) indicated that the usage of the ethnic alternative tongue is expected. In addition to these considerations, Wei (1994) discusses 'macro societal and 'micro-societal' viewpoints on tongue selection. People's language preferences are regulated and governed by the social structures of their multilingual community. When it comes to language choice, the micro viewpoint indicates people use language in response to what they see and hear from other people in a given situation. It is thus impossible to anticipate language usage solely from the domain since it is linked to the verbal communication within a group (Wei, 1994), which may be investigated using conversation analysis (CA).

Concerning the macro-societal viewpoint model, academics such as Weinreich (1953) and Wei (1994) both suggest the complementary distribution method and the disagreement replica. According to the primary theory, all of the language and dialects of the linguistic society are used to accomplish a certain task. Consequently, language or their variants are allocated to a variety of roles that work together to create a unified multilingual system. Both languages are constantly competing in the conflict model, but the complimentary model assumes that they are equal in terms of social status.

Housing speculation and the common set-up method may be viewed from a micro viewpoint. According to the first idea, people "adjust their speech to folks they like or whom they like to be liked by" (Myers-Scotton, 2006). According to Myers-Scotton, this idea might explain why member of minorities want to utilize the typical talking to integrate into the new group, leading to a possible linguistic shift (Myers-

Scotton, 2006). As Wei (1994) suggests, tongue option may be prejudiced by social network elements. A "dialectic link" exists between "speakers' linguistic behaviors and [their] interpersonal interactions" under this notion (Wei, 1994). Consequently, in multilingual environments, the choice of language is influenced by social contacts, and researchers may explore participant linguistic identity by examining the identity of people with whom they engage (Wei, 1994). An effective way to describe a certain kind of community is to concentrate on its most influential individuals.

It is common in multilingual societies for individuals to move back and forth between two languages while speaking (Harley, 2008), which is known as code-switching. According to Wei and Wu (2009), "the most distinctive behavior of the bilingual speaker," chatting in two languages simultaneously is another method to detect whether someone is bilingual. Although code-switching was traditionally seen as an indication of language inadequacy and memory issues, it is now seen as a proof of multilingual people' ability to speak two languages fluently. Code-switching is now considered a natural part of FD literature, contrary to popular belief. Coulmas (2005) cites a number of social and practical reasons for code-switching.

### **2.2.3 Language Shift and Maintenance**

As a case study in language shifts, Hungarian was progressively displaced by German in Oberwart, Austria (Gal, 1979). While a talking society continue to use the words in one or more life domains in spite of interacting with normal English, it is referred to as language maintenance (Pauwels, 2004).

### **2.2.4 Language Shift Studies**

National minority community, anywhere the dominant words is in each day touch with the verbal communication speak by the national minority populations, have been the topic of several language shift studies (the minority one). Speech shift is a "product of pre-migration and post-migration experiences mediated via culture," as Clyne (2003) outlined (Clyne, 2003). Language change is not necessarily the consequence of migration, though. There are various "political, economic, and social factors" that may lead to words change in non-migrant inhabitants, according to Fishman (1991) and Holmes (2001). For the Maori of New Zealand, for example (Fishman, 1991), the shift is the outcome of the interaction among two languages, with the English language being more dominant than the other (Maori). Languages that more strong speakers speak are more probable to be preserved than those that are progressively lost through linguistic interaction, according to Michieka (2012). For two reasons, data collection in any language shift instance is difficult for researchers. As a first step, researchers find it difficult to gather data previous to and behind a language shift occurs because of the "slow and cumulative" natural world of verbal communication change (Fishman, 1991). This means that although census data is widely accepted to be an essential research data gathering tool, it is frequently inaccurate because most of the organizations that handle them have some type of vested interest in the data (Fishman, 1991).

According to a given institution's goals, questions may be formulated in a way that influences the data's accuracy (Fishman, 1991). The results of these censuses may also be skewed by the fact that they rely heavily on participants' estimates of their actual language usage (Pauwels, 2004). A change in a speech community's language may also be detected via surveys and participant observation. Language skills, attitudes, and language usage may all be assessed by questionnaires. In addition, it is possible to examine

language shift/maintenance by analyzing language choices and the reasons behind these choices in a speech community (Pauwels, 2004).

### **2.2.5 Types of Language Shift**

There have been several categories of language shift (Clyne, 2003; Tandefelt, 1992). Some examples of language changes include partial and complete, macro-and micro-level, and Tandefelt (1992) distinguished between these four kinds of shifts. There is an ongoing transition in the community's language. With the second, linguistic change has reached its "point of no return" (Tandefelt, 1992). Finally, a micro-level shift relates to a single person's linguistic behavior, referred to as a macro-level shift (Tandefelt, 1992).

### **2.2.6 Causes of Language Shift**

Fishman (1991) says that a community's linguistic change is influenced by physical, demographic, and social/cultural dislocations. The following is a short description of each of these three. a. Displacement of both physical and demographic nature: Fisher (1991) claims that the entire community is affected by this form of dislocation because "physical and demographic arrangements have cultural (and hence language in culture) ramifications" (paraphrased) (Fishman, 1991). A community's effort to reverse a linguistic shift should always take its demographic circumstances into account. For example, these demographic characteristics contain where the words speaker reside, how near they are to one other, and how easy to get to the speech institution could be for speaker of different ages (Fishman, 1991).

In diverse groups, gender differences have been seen in language change. Because of exogamous marriages, male words move was more marked in areas where men were more likely to marry outside of their ethnic group than women, such as the case of Lebanese and Turkish migrant in Australia (Clyne, 2003). Language shift happened more commonly in women than in men, who were engaged in exogamous marriages, as was the case in Filipino and Japanese migrant populations in Australia.

### **2.2.7 Language Attitudes**

An attitude is a complex phrase that encompasses many distinct qualities, therefore describing it is not easy, according to Garrett (2010). On the other hand, attitudes have been characterized as having three essential components: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (Garrett, 2010). Firstly, attitudes impact an individual's perceptions of the world and specific situations; secondly, emotions are connected to the attitude item; and thirdly, attitudes interfere with behavior (Garrett, 2010). People who have a positive attitude toward the language and its speakers are more likely to learn and use a new language (Garrett, 2010; Karahan, 2007; Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009), According to Baker, "in the life of a language, attitudes to that language seem to be vital in linguistic repair, maintenance... deterioration or death" (Baker, 1992). Furthermore, according to Holmes et al. (1993), New Zealand's Tongan, Greek, and Chinese groups have different degrees of language shift and preservation because of their language attitudes. Researchers discovered that the use of the minority language in diverse contexts was encouraged by favorable views, which in turn helped counter the sluggish move toward mainstream language usage.

It might be challenging to keep a language alive if the community has a negative view of it. According to several studies, including Fishman (1985), a person's attitude toward a language is not necessarily a reliable indicator of whether a language will be maintained or shifted. These are the principles that make up a group's identity and culture and are considered the most significant. In addition, Slavik (2001) emphasized the relevance of the language's instrumental utility in preserving that language. Despite their favorable feelings about English, Maltese migrants in Canada were found to be well along in the process of switching from Maltese to English as their first language. Due to the refugees' belief that Maltese was not helpful in daily situations, this is why it was easy for them to accept English as a daily life language (Slavik, 2001). Attitudes are difficult to study since they are "psychological constructions" (Garrett, 2010). Therefore, it is vital to keep in mind that the attitudes recorded may not accurately represent the views of the group studied. According to Baker (1992), respondents may alter their sentiments in interviews and surveys so that they look more attractive or pleasing to their audience. This decision may be affected by the researcher's tone of voice and the words they use (Garrett, 2010). Research objectives are emphasized by Baker (1992) and Holmes et al. (1993).

As a result, it is essential to compare reported and observed attitudes. Societal treatment studies, direct measurements, and indirect measures are the three most prevalent methods of examining people's attitudes (Garrett, 2010). To examine language attitudes, indirect approaches rely heavily on the matched-guise method, whereas the first two methods use a variety of methodologies. In addition, each of the three approaches has a different frequency of usage. Policy papers, media scripts, ads, and other sources infer participants' beliefs in societal therapy research. Participants' linguistic attitude, or evaluative preference, may be assessed by asking them direct questions (Garrett, 2010). Surveys, questionnaires, and interviews are often used for this purpose. Last but not least, indirect methods entail employing techniques such as the matched guise technique to elicit participants' language attitudes without directly asking them questions (see Garrett, 2010). Direct approaches are often utilized, followed by indirect approaches, while social therapeutic approaches are seldom used in linguistic attitude research (Garret, 2010). Accordingly, the research focuses on how the participants feel about French and its many forms, pertinent to the study. The following section focuses on identity and the link between language and religion.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Aims and Questions**

These findings will be helpful for future studies of ethnic minority populations in Britain by only if a full account of the words usage, competence, attitudes, and cultural practices of a diverse group of French families in elementary school and high school. The research locations are the Ecole Francaise School and the Lycee international school in the United Kingdom, both French complementing schools.

#### **3.2 Research Approach and Design**

A questionnaire, observation, field notes, and interviews are all part of a multi-approach research that includes both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Qualitative investigate method are inclined by anthropological perspective. There are two case studies in this study including students, teachers and parents from Leeds and Ealing in London. There were multiple trips to these extra schools over the

researcher's 16 weeks as a full-time teacher. Surveys, semi-structured interviews, as well as a language competency test were all employed to acquire data for this research.

Similar to Richards (2011), the nearby research focus on group and persons and tries to present an in-depth assessment of their language use, attitudes about language use, identities, and attitudes toward studying religion outside of the family home in French-speaking nations. It tells a whole story by integrating various descriptions and interpretations with data culled from a variety of places. Reflexivity, dependability, and validity are all key considerations in the study outlined here, since the researchers play a key role in the selection and understanding of data. Since the study employs a number of data-gathering equipment, it is possible to do some triangulation. According to this, it is possible to establish validity and reliability. Now that we have spoken about case studies, ethnography's effect on study methodology, and data collection equipment, it's time for us to get down to the nitty-gritty.

### **3.3 Participant Observation and Field Notes**

The term "participant observation" refers to a researcher's participation in the group's everyday activities and events (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; Starfield, 2010). Mason (2000) characterizes it as a method for "producing data which require the researcher immersing herself or oneself in research setting so that they may experience and witness at first hand a variety of dimensions in and of that environment." Even though the data gathered by this approach may be vulnerable to interpretation (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Hakim, 1987), it is nevertheless deemed helpful in determining the actual behavior of the informants rather than what they claim to be. "The objective of such observation is to dig deep and analyze extensively the many occurrences that compose the life cycle of the unit to make generalizations about the larger population to which that unit belongs" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). If possible, the observer should be an insider, a group member; this allows for easier access and more natural behavior by the subjects, rather than a scenario in which a foreigner is there (Nortier, 2008; Blackledge & Creese 2010). Because they are not directly involved with the study location or participants, outsiders may prefer the community because they have no personal stake in the project (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). Blackledge and Creese (2010), in conjunction with Hamid (2011), found that the benefits of both insider and outsider viewpoints may be gained by researching this one. While simultaneously "achieving intimacy and retaining distance," the researchers attempted to do so (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). As the researchers are fluent in Fusha, Levantine, Iraqi, Egyptian, and Maghrebi Christianity (to varying degrees), they could be regarded as insiders in the classrooms and among the instructors and parents. As a result, they were able to comprehend and speak with youngsters who spoke English and Christianity and adults who talked predominantly in Christianity. Muslim women in the UK have a unique status as insiders at both schools. At the similar time, they had common wellbeing with the students, such as enjoying the same TV shows and having French-like life experience in the United Kingdom and their home countries. This allowed them to talk about their experiences as a British immigrant while also discussing political and religious challenges occurring in the French world. It was clear to both adults and children that they were an example of a bilingual person living in the UK and that they were doing research that others might use. Because of their position as an unknown, they were capable to gain respect from the participants because they had established themselves as independent researchers with a set timetable, specified observation hours, and



established goals. They utilized a checklist to keep track of everything that needed to be done for the research project.

### **3.4 Questionnaires**

As a technique of collecting data on people's personal information, language preferences, linguistic dominance, and attitudes, this research employed questionnaires to collect data (Codo, 2008; Nortier, 2008).

### **3.5 Factors to Consider in the Design of Questionnaires**

As no adjustments or corrections may be made after the questionnaire has been administered, questionnaires must be well-structured before distribution (Rasinger, 2010). To avoid implying a preferred answer, questions should be specific and non-suggestive (Rasinger, 2010). An item shouldn't feature several questions with just one possible solution; instead, it should be designed to prevent misinterpretation (Wiersma, 1969). Finally, avoid bringing up any sensitive topics that make respondents feel uncomfortable (Wiersma, 1969).

There are two kinds of questionnaires, oral and written, according to Nortier (2008), and each one has benefits and drawbacks. Oral questionnaires are more effective in collecting data because they eliminate any barriers posed by participants' inability to read and write, while written questions allow participants to respond freely without being inhibited by the interviewer's presence.

### **3.6 The Questionnaire in This Study**

Surveys with closed-ended and multiple-choice questions were provided to the students in this research for the data collection on the following:

- a) The demographics of the students, including their gender, age, country of origin, and religious affiliations
- b) Using two different sets of questionnaires to look at how students use language in their homes, communities, complementary schools, and the mainstream school, researchers looked at how students use language in all four of these contexts. People might indicate how often they spoke Christianity and English by filling out a Likert scale. As a means of "collecting respondents' thoughts, opinions, and attitudes concerning numerous language-related topics," the Likert scale was used (Brown 2001).

## **4. Findings and Discussion**

### **4.1 Description of Research Sites**

We should keep in mind that these speech communities may have complicated relations since member's work in English standard Language of Fusha (the target language for class lectures and textbooks), and the location. Because of their ancestry, the children were able to be educated in both Fusha and the regional languages they were already acquainted with. He believes that when the young people talk about learning French in their regional dialects, they are referring to the language of France (2009).

## 4.2 School Management and Aims

No teaching credentials are required for the head teacher; a lady in her late fifties with a lengthy history of charity volunteerism could work within British Islamic organizations. Founded in 1993, it is her brainchild. She may be classified as a stern teacher who imposed rigorous restrictions on discipline, tardiness, and lesson preparations. According to her interviewees, administering the school was much simpler when the government offered the school's facilities for free; but, during the research time, they had to spend £250 a week to rent the facilities. In addition to the cost of insurance and police checks (CRB), this added financial load had compelled the school to only function on Sundays, although it had previously been operating on Friday and Sunday.

## 5. Conclusion

Among the topics covered in this chapter are the history of migration, population, geography, and socioeconomic status of French populations in the UK. It also looked at the connections between the French language, religion, and identity. "French are still grappling with how to identify themselves, as a group and individually, and how to belong to a group and nevertheless portray a separate identity," Bassiouney (2009) adds. In this battle, "language is at the center of it all." This research emphasizes the importance of the French speech in the formation of French national and Christian identities. French language and the French diaspora identities will be examined as part of this project. According to current British political culture, the French are a homogenous population inside British society. However, this research contradicts these traditional conceptions, emphasizing French's varied identities and the complicated interrelationships.

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